

REMARKS

Applicants thank Examiner Kavanaugh for his time and courtesy extended during the telephonic interview with the undersigned attorney and his colleague Gary Dewar on November 30, 2005. The amendments and remarks set forth herein are consistent therewith. The following is intended to constitute a proper recollection of the interview in accordance with M.P.E.P. §713.04, and also to provide a full response to the Office action.

Before entry of this Amendment and Response, the status of the application according to the pending Office action is as follows:

- Claims 1, 3-5, 9-14, 16-21, 23, 34, and 35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,535,553 to Derderian et al. (hereinafter "Derderian").
- Claims 6-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Derderian.
- Claims 25-33 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.
- Claim 38 is allowed.

Applicants hereby amend claims 1, 26, 28, 29, 34, and 35, without prejudice, as shown in the preceding Listing of Claims.

Applicants hereby cancel claim 25, and amend claims 1, 34, and 35 to include the allowable subject matter of now cancelled claim 25. Applicants hereby amend claims 26, 28, and 29 to revise claim dependency for consistency. No new matter is entered thereby. In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of all grounds of rejection and objection and passage of claims 1, 3-14, 16-24, and 26-38 to allowance.

1. Claims 1, 3-5, 9-14, 16-21, 23, 34, and 35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being unpatentable over Derderian. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection as applied to the claims, as amended.

Applicants have amended claims 1, 34, and 35 to include the allowable subject matter of claim 25, which was not rejected over Derderian. Accordingly, claims 1, 34, and 35 are patentable over Derderian under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b). Because claims 3-5, 9-14, 16-21, and 23 depend, either directly or indirectly, from amended claim 1, and include all respective limitations thereof, Applicants respectfully submit that these claims are patentable as well.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 3-5, 9-14, 16-21, 23, 34, and 35 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Derderian.

2. Claims 6-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Derderian. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection as applied to the claims, as amended.

Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the allowable subject matter of claim 25, which was not rejected over Derderian. Accordingly, claim 1 is patentable over Derderian under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Because claims 6-8 depend, either directly or indirectly, from amended claim 1, and include all respective limitations thereof, Applicants respectfully submit that these claims are patentable as well.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 6-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being anticipated by Derderian.

3. Claims 25-33 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and

any intervening claims. Applicants have cancelled claim 25, thereby rendering the objection moot with respect to that claim.

Applicants have amended independent claim 1 to include the allowable subject matter of claim 25, thereby putting claim 25 in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim (i.e., claim 1). Claims 26-33 depend, either directly or indirectly, from amended independent claim 1 and are, therefore, allowable.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to claims 25-33, as being dependent upon a rejected base claim.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration, withdrawal of all grounds of rejection and objection, and allowance of claims 1, 3-14, 16-21, 23, 26-35, and 38 in due course.

Additionally, Applicants respectfully request reentry and allowance of withdrawn claims 22 and 24 as these claims depend, either directly or indirectly, from independent claim 1, which is patentable for the reasons discussed hereinabove. Applicants further respectfully request reentry and allowance of withdrawn claims 36 and 37, as these claims depend directly from independent claim 35, which is patentable for the reasons discussed hereinabove.

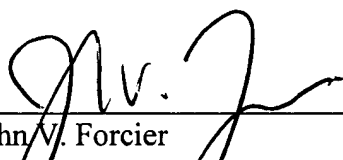
The Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative by telephone at the number listed below to discuss any outstanding issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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